

## ABSTRACT

The present invention provides novel cleavage agents and polymerases for the  
5 cleavage and modification of nucleic acid. The cleavage agents and polymerases find use,  
for example, for the detection and characterization of nucleic acid sequences and  
variations in nucleic acid sequences. In some embodiments, the 5' nuclease activity of a  
variety of enzymes is used to cleave a target-dependent cleavage structure, thereby  
indicating the presence of specific nucleic acid sequences or specific variations thereof.

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